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ROME
AGCA

A left-wing magazine said Wednesday it has photocopies of telegrams showing U.S. Ambassador Maxwell Rabb worked out a plan to link Bulgaria to the shooting of Pope John Paul II and thus discredit the Soviet Union.

The U.S. Embassy issued an urgent statement calling the purported telegrams "fabrications."

"We assume the two documents are intended to discredit the United States as well as the Italian magistracy that is investigating the possible involvement of Bulgarian agents in the papal assassination attempt," the statement said.

Turkish terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca is serving a life sentence for shooting and wounding the pope in St. Peter's Square May 13, 1981.

The report was the latest in a series of related events involving Agca, the kidnapping of 15-year-old Emanuela Orlandi and a hasty trip to Bulgaria by the Italian magistrate investigating the plot against the pope.

The weekly magazine Peace and War said it received the photocopies of the purported telegrams anonymously in the mail. Copies of the magazine reproducing them were obtained by United Press International in advance of publication Thursday.

"The compromise of Bulgaria, the U.S.S.R.'s most faithful satellite, would be a step toward discrediting the Soviet leaders and further implicate Moscow as a center of international terrorism," a telegram dated August 1982 said.

"Italy and her allies would be shown the Kremlin's aim is the destabilization of Western Europe, thus calling into question the value of any dialogue," it said.

The purported telegrams were stamped "secret" and addressed by Rabb to the secretary of state with copies to the CIA, U.S. Information Agency and U.S. consuls in Milan and Palermo.

The embassy sent copies to the State Department and a spokesman said officials in Washington would be able to point out style errors proving the telegrams are fake.

The first telegram was dated three months before Italian police arrested Bulgarian airline official Sergei Antonov on charges of complicity in the plot against the pope.

It proposed a public relations campaign in Italy linking Bulgaria to Agca's attempt to kill the pope.

Agca's confessions to Italian investigators led to Antonov's arrest in Rome Nov. 25, 1982.

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"The European media have enthusiastically developed themes on the lines anticipated that the gunman was directed by the Bulgarian secret police, that the Bulgarians are under the total control of the KGB, and that the KGB was headed at the time by the present Soviet leader," reported a second telegram date December 1982.

The telegram referred to former Soviet KGB chief Yuri Andropov who had succeeded the late Leonid Brezhnev a month earlier.

The purported telegrams came to light less than two days after magistrate Ilario Martella left for Sofia, apparently to try to interview two employees of the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome.

Agca, 24, was brought to Rome for questioning by police investigating the kidnapping of Emanuela Orlandi, 15-year-old daughter of a papal messenger, by a gang demanding Agca's release.